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Tuesday, 23 November 1993
at 3 p.m.

NEW YORK

President: Mr. INSANALLY
(Guyana)

Vice-President: Mr. SOH
(Republic of Korea)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM 33 (*continued*)

QUESTION OF EQUITABLE REPRESENTATION ON AND INCREASE IN THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL (A/48/264 and Add.1, Add.2 and Add.2/Corr.1, Add.3 and Add.4)

Mr. NGO QUANG XUAN (Viet Nam): First of all, I would like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report contained in document A/48/264, which provides us with useful guidance and input for our discussion. My Government has already communicated our views to the Secretary-General, and I wish now only to stress a few points that my delegation believes are of great importance.

The end of the cold war has provided the United Nations with unprecedented opportunities to discharge its noble responsibility with regard to world peace, stability and development. However, the present situation also brings with it many pressing challenges which can be adequately met only by the joint efforts of the whole international community. The United Nations is therefore assuming a more important role in international life than ever before.

We are now on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations. The map of the world is no longer as it was when this Organization was established. The number of Member States has increased from 51 to 184. The geopolitical realities which served as the basis for the composition of its principal organs, particularly the Security Council, during the years following the Second World War were fundamentally different from current ones. This raises many questions about the adequacy of the United Nations system.

The adaptation and adjustment of United Nations structures to world realities has apparently lagged behind the requirements of the times. Moreover, the constantly growing volume of work entrusted to the United Nations and the need for collective action in resolving international affairs in an increasingly interdependent world make periodical reviews and adjustments of the size and structure of the major organs of the United Nations system necessary.

The Security Council, which is vested with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, has during the past few years dramatically increased its activities in all continents of the world. However, its membership has remained unchanged for 30 years and is now less representative than ever before in both size and geographical distribution of seats.

This situation demands that the United Nations itself reform its structures and mode of operation so as to ensure efficiency, democracy, transparency, fairness and equality among all Member States. In this connection, the delegation of Viet Nam believes that the restructuring of the Security Council should be an integral part of a broad and far-reaching process of reform of the United Nations

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system. This will enable the Organization fully to discharge the important work assigned to it by the Charter.

The issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council was placed on the agenda of the General Assembly 14 years ago. Unfortunately, not much progress has been made. Last year's General Assembly resolution 47/62, adopted by consensus, certainly marks a qualitative change and reflects the recognition of the international community that the time has come to reassess the composition of the Security Council.

Viet Nam endorses the idea of re-examining and enlarging the composition of the Security Council. In view of the great increase in the membership of the United Nations and other new developments over the past 48 years, an increase in Security Council membership has now become a must and should bring about more equitable representation. At the same time, redressing the imbalance in regional representation in the Council's permanent membership is an objective demand. The re-examination and reform of the composition of the Security Council must this time be aimed at producing not only an increase in its membership but also a substantive change to ensure respect for the principles of equal sovereignty and of democracy in decision-making, and to bring about a more balanced and rational relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly.

Since the Security Council acts on behalf of all Member States of the United Nations, it should reflect the universality of the whole Organization. Therefore, Viet Nam holds the view that in enlarging the composition of the Security Council due attention must be given to the concerns of developing countries, which make up more than three quarters of the total United Nations membership, with a view to ensuring that the voice of the majority is adequately heard when the Council decides on the settlement of issues of importance to the international community. Moreover, while closely cooperating with other United Nations organs, the Security Council should confine itself to its own sphere of competence. Its procedures should also be improved to reflect greater transparency and accountability.

In the past, various appropriate reviews and enlargements of the membership of the principal organs of the United Nations have significantly strengthened the capacity of the Organization to resolve global issues. It is my sincere hope that this time the debate on the subject now under examination will constitute a positive step in the right direction. The process of reform and democratization within the United Nations, particularly the equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council, will effectively provide the Organization with a better capacity to serve the purposes and principles of the Charter.

Mr. HATANO (Japan): I take this opportunity to express the views of the Japanese Government on agenda item 33, "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council."

To the President of the General Assembly and those ambassadors - particularly Ambassador Chew of Singapore - who have actively participated in the formulation of the draft resolution on this item, I pay high tribute.

With the end of the cold war, the international community is placing ever greater expectations in the United Nations. Today the Organization is confronted with unprecedented challenges and opportunities.

Under those circumstances, the legitimacy and credibility of the United Nations and the Security Council must be enhanced through a process of reform. The need to expand the membership of the Security Council while ensuring its effectiveness is thus gaining support throughout the international community.

Japan is prepared to do all it can to discharge its responsibilities in the reformed United Nations and in response to the expectations of the international community.

Japan supports the draft resolution, calling upon the General Assembly to establish an open-ended working group to discuss this issue. It is extremely important that the draft resolution gain approval by consensus.

I trust that all members of the working group will take part in the discussion in a constructive manner and that they will prepare a meaningful report and recommendations on this important issue. Japan is ready to participate actively in this endeavour, and is hopeful that a solution can be found in time for the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations in 1995.

Mr. GUJRAL (India): We have, I feel, come a long way since the days of the thirty-fourth session, during which India, together with several other non-aligned countries, had the item "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council" inscribed on the agenda. Our objective at that time was merely to seek an expansion of the non-permanent membership of the Security Council to reflect the phenomenal increase in the membership of the United Nations. The initiative remained dormant for

several years, as we were persuaded by some countries, particularly the permanent members, that the time had not come for a change in the composition of the Security Council.

However, following the dramatic events of the late 1980s public opinion around the world led to a revival of the proposal, and it became evident - more than before - that it was imperative to review the composition and the functioning of the Security Council. This reality was recognized by the General Assembly when it unanimously adopted resolution 47/62 in 1992.

We have before us the Secretary-General's report (A/48/264 and Add.1-4 and Add.2/Corr.1), which brings together the views of several Member States on the questions before us today. Moreover, a number of leaders of different nations have articulated their views from this rostrum. Fortunately, the framers of the United Nations Charter were well aware that its contents could not be frozen in perpetuity and that it should be responsive to changing circumstances and requirements.

Chapter XVIII of the Charter was so designed as to give future generations the option to amend it in order to meet the needs of the time. The Charter, I must say, has stood the test of time for nearly half a century. It has fallen to our lot to update it and make it a vibrant and contemporary instrument of multilateralism.

The numerical compulsion for reform is too evident to need reiteration. As representatives know, the ratio between Security Council membership and General Assembly membership has declined from 1:4.6 in 1945 to 1:12 today, and the ratio between the permanent membership of the Security Council and General Assembly membership has declined even more tellingly - from 1:10 in 1945 to 1:36 today. On the basis of arithmetic alone, therefore, there is an obvious need to increase the number of permanent members of the Council to 10, or perhaps even 11, and the number of non-permanent members could go up to 12, or maybe 14.

The compulsion of which I have spoken has become more telling because of the urgent need to cope with the changing realities of international relations. The elimination of ideological barriers has enhanced the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security, primary responsibility for which the Charter assigns to the Security Council. We are happy that the Council is playing a very effective role today, unfettered by the ideological wranglings of the past. For this very reason, it is all the more important that it should enjoy the trust and faith of the entire membership of the United Nations and be given added legitimacy for its efforts.

The demands on the Council have increased, and in response the Council's initiatives have increased. Its initiatives will be better understood and its decisions better implemented if the Council itself is more representative of the membership of the Organization. We are convinced that a marginal increase in the size of the Council will not affect its effectiveness. Even the smaller Council that we know was unable to remedy its paralysis during the cold war. In fact, failure to change it might endanger its credibility and moral authority. Unity of purpose, rather than size, is the factor that determines the efficiency of any organization.

The Secretary-General's report contains a whole range of proposals put forward by States, big and small, rich and poor. The proposals are as varied as the countries themselves. The underlying theme is that membership of the Security Council should be reviewed on the basis of the principles of equity and efficiency. The objective of the review should be to further the purposes and principles of the Charter by ensuring that the Council, which acts on behalf of the entire membership, reflects the composition of the world body. In other words, we already have a firm basis for a review.

In our view, the next step is for the General Assembly to set up an open-ended working group to examine these wide-ranging proposals and to make appropriate recommendations for adoption - if possible, by consensus. In the first instance, the working group should establish the exact extent to which the permanent and non-permanent membership of the Security Council should be expanded. The establishment of the criteria for new permanent and non-permanent members would be the next logical step.

We believe that the following should be the factors determining the qualifications for new members: equitable regional representation; consistency in support for and participation in important political and economic activities and peace-keeping operations of the United Nations; consistency in fulfilling financial obligations to the United Nations and its specialized institutions; and countries' population, size of economy and potential.

With the increasing emphasis on the principles of democracy at the national level, there is an urgent need to extend this principle to international life and to give increasing attention to the role of peoples, particularly in the activities of the United Nations and in the sphere of development. The fiftieth anniversary is rightly dedicated to the theme "We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World". Populations reflect both an

expression of the principles of democracy and an element of power. The present permanent membership of the Security Council reflects a combined population of less than 1.7 billion. This leaves out two thirds of humanity - several distinct civilizations without representation as permanent members of the Council.

Similarly, the size of the economy and its resilience and self-sufficiency in terms of supplies of raw materials in the markets are factors that have a bearing on a country's ability to exercise independence of judgement and action on international issues. This also should be an important consideration in deciding upon the countries that could have permanent member status.

The contribution of a Member State to peace-keeping could be an important criterion in judging its suitability for inclusion in the permanent membership.

Financial contributions should be judged not in absolute terms but in the context of an assessment that reflects the higher sacrifice made by the developing countries. With regard to this criterion, the current situation, as well as potential members, should be taken into account, as another review may not be possible for several years.

Some of the proposals of Member States favour regional rotation in the Security Council and seek the creation of a third category of member. The principle of rotation is already embodied in the category of non-permanent membership, and this would be extended with such an increase in the number of permanent members. Permanent membership on a rotational basis would militate against the continued representation of, and the accumulation of experience by, developing countries. Equity dictates that there should be new permanent members from the developing world and that they should be elected globally, due weight being given to geographical considerations.

The open-ended working group of the General Assembly, when it has been set up, will have a formidable task before it. It will have to sift through the enormous amount of material emanating from Member States, other institutions and individuals. The eventual outcome will have to be a political package that reflects the wishes of the international community as a whole. Instant remedies and provisional solutions will not be helpful.

Reforms relating to the functioning of the Security Council and its relationship with the other principal organs of the United Nations, also deserve close attention. My delegation therefore urges a patient, detailed and careful review that will result in solutions that will serve the international community for many years to come. My delegation stands ready to participate in this exercise with all the dedication at its command.

Mr. WISNUMURTI (Indonesia): Recent developments on the international scene have focused our attention on the increasing importance of the role played by the Security Council. This lofty body has undertaken an unprecedented number of activities as it is being called upon to deal with some of the most critical and complex issues of our time. Consequently, members look forward to its playing an even more effective role now that the impediments which paralysed it for so long no longer exist.

Concurrently, however, it is undeniable that the Council, comprising 15 members, purports to act on behalf of an Organization, the membership of which has now reached 184 and is approaching universality. This stark imbalance has called into question the legitimacy, equity and credibility of a body which, in terms of the Charter, acts on behalf of the Organization and whose decisions are binding on all Member States.

It is pertinent to note in this regard that other organs of the United Nations, most notably the General Assembly, have adapted their composition and structure to the new and emerging realities. In the case of the Security Council, however, the process of expansion initiated nearly a decade and a half ago, has lagged behind and somehow remains beyond the purview of an integral part of the broad and far-reaching process of reform and revitalization of the United Nations itself.

Meanwhile, the number of developing countries that have become Members of the Organization and constitute the overwhelming majority has grown and their role in the international arena has increased. From another perspective, some developing States that now have a decisive weight in world affairs are being marginalized. Moreover, decisions impinging on critical issues of peace and security are being taken by a handful of States, a state of affairs that has justifiably given rise to indignation and resentment. In short, the composition of the Security Council, especially during the past three decades, has been grossly unbalanced, inequitable and unrepresentative.

It is time, therefore, to undertake a serious review and reappraisal of this question in order to ensure that the Security Council truly reflects not only the significant increase in membership but also the profound change and the transition that have taken place on the international landscape. We remain convinced that a larger Council will be more credible, will make its activities more effective and will reflect the broader membership of the United Nations.

We therefore endorse the proposal for an increase in both the permanent and the non-permanent Council seats in order to achieve equitable geographic representation and an acceptable balance between the developed and developing countries. Such an increase, covering all regions of the world has become imperative owing not only to the substantive increase in membership but also to the undeniable realities of the international situation.

We are faced with an untenable anomaly where three States from one region are permanent members while another region is underrepresented and two others are unrepresented. Thus, major regions and countries of the world are arbitrarily denied permanent membership. In my delegation's view, therefore, an increase in membership of the Council should accommodate new permanent members on the basis of a combination of appropriate criteria that would reflect, among other things, the new and emerging constellation of Powers, their regional and global responsibilities, and the political, economic and demographic realities. These include the willingness of States to assume the responsibilities inherent in such a status and thereby to contribute to bolstering the Council's capacity to fulfil its mandate; participation in peace-keeping; proven competency to undertake diplomatic initiatives and to make substantial contributions to conflict prevention and conflict resolution; the support of the Government and the people concerned for the United Nations and timely contributions to its budget; and active participation and leadership in a wide array of subregional, regional and extraregional organizations. To these we must add size and strategic location, economic power - both present and potential - pace of industrial growth and technological progress as well as human and natural resources. Finally, permanent membership for those non-nuclear-weapon States that have long played a constructive role in international relations can no longer be denied.

Concurrently, the non-permanent membership should also be increased and equitably distributed among various regional groups, thereby achieving greater democratization and a balance in composition.

In sum, such an approach to enlarge both the permanent and the non-permanent membership would reflect the current configuration of membership, ensure the representation of all continents and geographic groups and give rise to a more representative and effective Security Council.

Finally, the question of the composition of the Security Council cannot be resolved in isolation from its voting practices. The right of veto was accorded as a result of exceptional historical circumstances which no longer prevail. It is incompatible with the equal rights of States and disregards the wishes of the vast majority of States. We are aware that this mechanism has been rarely used in recent times but there is no assurance that it will not be used again with its negative repercussions. Hence, the veto system should be reviewed in order to promote democratic decision-making procedures.

The reform and revitalization of the Security Council is a *conditio sine qua non* for strengthening the United Nations and is critically important for the emerging new international order. In these endeavours, the main objective is to render the Council more responsive to changing realities and emerging challenges in a dynamic context. In this respect it is both necessary and appropriate that the question now before us should be examined with caution and circumspection in an open-ended working group. Quite apart from considering the question of review of the Council's membership, we also envisage discussion of related issues such as its relationship with and accountability to the General Assembly and the changes needed in the Council's procedures and practices. My delegation will participate constructively with the objective of reaching a broad-based consensus and ensuring the success of our endeavours.

Mr. SUCHARIPA (Austria): Since the end of the cold war the importance of the Security Council for the maintenance of world peace has increased significantly. As a non-permanent member of the Security Council during the years 1991 and 1992, Austria experienced the new cooperative spirit of international relations which has enabled the Council to play a crucial role commensurate with the functions and powers conferred on it by the Charter of the United Nations.

Owing to the augmented importance of the Security Council, its effectiveness is of the highest significance for the maintenance of international peace and security. That is why the Government of Austria is of the opinion that a thorough discussion of the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council is necessary before decisions are taken.

Therefore, I gladly take this opportunity to outline briefly the main points that will guide the Austrian delegation throughout the debate on the important issue before us, a debate that might well occupy us for many months, if not years, to come. We should not rush our decision or feel bound by artificial target dates. The issue before us is much too important. We should, moreover, allow for further international developments to be taken fully into account in our deliberations.

In all modesty, the Austrian delegation feels particularly entitled to make an input to the upcoming debate: Austria currently possesses an intimate knowledge of the working methods of the Security Council, knowledge that was gained both here in New York and in Vienna in the course of our most recent membership of the Council, which ended on 31 December last year. At the same time, it is obvious that, while maintaining a high interest in the work of the Council, Austria will not become a member of that body again for quite some time, regardless of the outcome and conclusions of this debate. We therefore combine knowledge and impartiality *vis-à-vis* the difficult issues that will be at the centre of our discussions.

Let me therefore summarize the main points of the Austrian position on this issue.

First of all, is there a need for an enlargement of the Security Council? At the founding of the United Nations in 1945, the ratio of the overall membership of the Organization to the membership of the Security Council was roughly six to one. The first enlargement of the Security Council occurred in 1965, taking into account the substantial increase in the overall membership of the United Nations that took place at that time. Despite this enlargement, the ratio achieved was only eight to one. The recent dramatic increase in the membership of the United Nations has made the ratio drop to twelve to one. It seems obvious that the increase in overall membership of the Organization has to be reflected in the composition of the Security Council.

My second point relates to criteria for the enlargement of the Security Council. Besides the arithmetical criterion to which I have just referred, aspects such as the efficiency and functionality of the Security Council cannot and must not be ignored. In order to preserve the efficiency of the Council, any enlargement should be limited to a small number of additional permanent and non-permanent members. It was pointed out this morning that all of us, but especially the smaller countries, which form the majority of the membership, have a particular interest in the effectiveness of the Council.

Third, what do we think would be the optimal size for an enlarged Security Council? We believe that a possible size, both allowing efficient work and reflecting the increase in the overall membership, would range somewhere between 21 and 25, which would mean a ratio of approximately nine to one or seven to one respectively.

Fourth, in order to achieve a broad, representative character any enlargement of the Security Council must maintain a balance between permanent members and non-permanent members. Thus, enlargement cannot be limited to one category of membership in the Security Council. Equally, any enlargement has to strike a balance between developing and developed members.

Fifth, the choice of additional permanent members of the Security Council should certainly take into consideration their potential for making a contribution both in the political and financial domain and to the overall peace-keeping efforts of the United Nations in the broad sense of this term. Careful attention has to be paid to all the criteria mentioned in Article 23, paragraph 1 of the Charter, which requires us to pay due regard

> "to the contribution of Members of the United Nations to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, and also to equitable geographical distribution".

Sixth, it is often said that the Council would profit from a more democratic decision-making process. We believe that due consideration will have to be given to this matter in order to maintain the trust of the United Nations membership as a whole in the activities of the Security Council. While the abolition of the veto power seems unrealistic and would in fact reduce the relevance of Security Council decision-making, certain modifications might certainly be discussed.

My seventh point relates to the issue of the transparency of the work of the Security Council. The need for greater transparency in the work of the Security council has been generally recognized. The Council itself has already taken a number of measures, which we welcome, to increase transparency, and a working group of the Council is continuing the discussion of this issue. The widespread feeling among the membership that there is a lack of transparency results, *inter alia*, from the fact that most of the Security Council's deliberations take place either in informal consultations closed to the rest of the United Nations membership or, in an earlier stage of the decision-making process, in informal contacts between small groups of interested Security Council members. There is no established mechanism for informing the rest of the United Nations membership about the outcome of these consultations.

In this context, it has to be stated that an increase in the Security Council's membership is not in itself going to remedy the lack of transparency. On the contrary, it seems more likely that an enlargement of the Council, which would make informal consultations of the whole more cumbersome, might relegate the decision-making process further to small subgroups or informal contact groups among interested members of the Security Council - in

hardly decrease. A flow of information from such informal contacts will be even more difficult to achieve than before, a problem that might even concern some of the non-permanent Council members not taking part in the early stages of the deliberations.

Therefore, any increase in membership should be accompanied by measures to increase transparency in the work of the Security Council. One possible solution could be stronger interaction between Security Council members and the countries belonging to their respective regional groups. There should be a clear understanding that the countries elected to or serving permanently on the Security Council have an obligation to keep the other members of their regional group informed on an ongoing basis.

In order to improve the effectiveness of its work, the Security Council should also try to consult more actively on specific conflicts with concerned States not members of the Security Council.

My eighth point is that in order to ensure closer cooperation and interaction between the Security Council and countries providing troops for peace-keeping operations, it has been suggested that working groups be created under Article 29 of the Charter on matters relating to the various peace-keeping operations - working groups in which the respective troop-contributing countries and other particularly interested States could participate. We feel that such a measure would reflect the importance given to participation in peace-keeping operations and might also constitute an incentive to Governments to take decisions to provide contingents.

Those were some basic remarks from our delegation at this stage of this important debate. We stand ready to work actively together with all other delegations in the working group that will be set up, and we will support the draft resolution which we understand will be put forward by the President to establish the appropriate procedure that should guide us through further deliberations on this subject.

Mr. WLOSOWICZ (Poland): The question of equitable representation on and increase of the membership of the Security Council is of utmost importance to the future of the United Nations and its role in maintaining international peace and security. During the last 20 years, discussions on this subject have been held at the various forums of the United Nations. With the lapse of time, the question of the membership in the Security Council and the powers of its members has been gaining more and more topicality. However, the political climate of the cold war era was not conducive to introducing substantial changes to the system envisaged by the founders of the United Nations.

It was the disappearance of bipolarity and of traditional ideological barriers that brought about increasing pressure to restructure the United Nations and to make it more democratic, as well as to adapt the Organization to the needs of the contemporary world. This applies in particular to the Security Council, whose ability successfully to discharge its mandate as set forth by the Charter has considerably increased.

On the other hand, despite the positive developments of the last four years, the appearance of certain negative phenomena which could be called side-effects of the post-cold-war transformation has made it crucial for the Security Council to function in an even more efficient and effective manner.

As Poland stressed in its reply concerning the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council",

> "Poland supports all efforts aimed at strengthening the role of the United Nations and enhancing its effectiveness and efficiency. A vast untapped potential in this regard is still embodied in the United Nations Charter itself. ... the Charter should be implemented consistently, and its application adapted to these realities and challenges of the contemporary world. This includes the possibility of considering an adjustment of the structures and functions of the United Nations, including its main organs [in particular the Security Council] as necessary." (*A/48/264/Add.1, p. 15*)

Poland is ready to take an active part in considering the proposals aimed at accommodating the United Nations structures and mechanisms, especially the Security Council, to the changing international situation and to the substantial increase in the membership of the Organization. Poland therefore takes a constructive approach with regard to the aspirations of those Member States that might markedly increase their contribution to the attainment of the objectives of the Organization if they were offered an enhanced status within the Security Council.

In the view of the Polish delegation, any expansion of the membership of the Security Council must not endanger its effectiveness. Also, it must not put in jeopardy the Council's ability to discharge its functions and powers. Here I am referring *inter alia* to the special responsibility of the permanent members and the existing status of non-permanent members of the Council. The well-established decision-making procedures should be

maintained. It must also be ensured that every regional group recognized in the United Nations is fairly represented in the Council, that the aspirations and interests of medium-sized States are met and that due attention is given to their political role in the region.

As it is rightly stressed in the preamble to the draft resolution under review, no effort should be spared to build a consensus on the issue under consideration. If adopted, the draft resolution should be seen as the beginning of the very important, but difficult and complex, process of forging an eventual agreement. We support the draft resolution, for it gives us a sufficiently broad and flexible framework to consider all the relevant issues.

We hope that, in the end, the Security Council will be better equipped to cope, on behalf of the international community, with its primary task of maintaining international peace and security and facing any challenge ahead.

Mr. SARDENBERG (Brazil): The agenda item we are addressing today is emblematic of the new international atmosphere and of the renewed role the United Nations is expected to play in it.

In response to resolution 47/62, more than 70 Governments have submitted their observations concerning the "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council". The general debate at this session of the General Assembly and the debate we are now holding also constitute relevant contributions to the consideration of this important issue. I believe it would be safe to say that we are already quite close to consensus on the idea that the membership of the Security Council should be increased in order to make it more representative of the membership at large, in view of the new realities in international life. It is our view that better representation will lead to a more democratic Security Council.

A number of States have stressed the point that, in order to preserve the efficiency of the Council, the increase in its membership should be extremely limited, the assumption being that the smaller the group, the more efficient it would be as a decision-making body. However, we should avoid the attraction of oversimplified correlations. A moderate expansion of the composition of the Council would not necessarily lessen its efficiency. Nor is it true that a smaller Council would necessarily be more efficient.

The exponential increase in the number of resolutions and other decisions adopted by the Council in recent times has created the impression of a new efficiency in its functioning. But we should be mindful of the difference between quantity and quality. Decisions taken too hastily, without a thorough and sober reflection on their multiple repercussions and without the benefit of a wider process of consultation, may lead to unforeseen or undesired results. Decisions involving questions of crucial concern to different States or groups of States need to be carefully considered from all relevant angles and perspectives.

In this regard, a more representative Council, reflecting the variety of resources and potential contributions of different States, as well as the complexities of different regions, would be better equipped to assess, in an efficient manner, ways and means to settle the multiple situations arising in different quarters of the globe.

The report of the Secretary-General of 20 July 1993 (A/48/264 and Add.1, Add.2/Corr.2, Add.3 and Add.4) contains a wealth of thoughtful comments from Member States on the subject of further enhancing the efficiency of the Council. These comments should serve as a relevant basis for consideration by the open-ended working group that we hope to see established by the General Assembly at this session.

The task of this working group will be most challenging. It will be entrusted with preparing recommendations on how to bring about, in a practical and timely way, an increase in the membership of the Security Council on the basis of equitable representation.

If the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security is to be preserved and enhanced, there is a need to match the expectations of the international community with regard to the ability of the Council to respond to them. In this connection, there is a growing awareness of the crucial relationship between a more appropriate composition of the Council and the improvement of its efficiency. A more representative and balanced structure would not only reinforce the authority of the Council in carrying out the difficult tasks placed before it but also be in keeping with the prevailing democratic spirit.

There should be an appropriate proportion between the size of the Council and that of the entire membership of the Organization. The different categories of members of the Council should be adequately balanced. The main regions of the world should be adequately represented in the different categories of members of the Council. And due regard should be paid to the capability of members to contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization.

The surge of ever-more-complex conflict situations in the post-cold-war era requires that this exercise should be addressed with care, but also with a sense of urgency. We note in this regard that the working group is expected to submit a report on the progress of its work before the end of the current session of the General Assembly, in September 1994.

In view of the complexity of the questions involved, it may be possible that consideration of all relevant aspects will not have been exhausted by then. None the less, it is our expectation that all Member States will dedicate intensive and constructive efforts towards advancing as far as possible on the subject.

As the Secretary-General points out in his report on the work of the Organization,

> "The question of the Security Council's membership structure is of crucial importance ...". *(A/48/1, para. 40)*

Like the Secretary-General, Brazil believes that it would be most timely if the issue were to be resolved by the fiftieth anniversary of the Organization.

In closing, I should like to recall the views expressed on this subject in the general debate of the current session of the General Assembly by the Minister of External Relations of Brazil, Ambassador Celso Amorim:

> "We note with satisfaction the establishment of a virtual consensus on the need to update the composition of the Security Council. It is our understanding that the growing role of the Council in matters which affect the fundamental interests of Member States corresponds to the need to ensure a more representative composition, and so enhance the Council's legitimacy and its efficiency. The reform of the Council must be achieved in such a way as not to aggravate further the imbalance between developed and developing countries in the decision-making process of the United Nations. The General Assembly, as the definitive democratic organ within the United Nations system, must play a decisive role in shaping that process." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-eighth Session, Plenary Meetings, 4th meeting, p. 4)*

Mr. ELHOUDERI (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: Following the end of the cold war, the world has witnessed numerous changes. Although the results of such changes have not taken final form yet it is quite certain that a new reality does exist and that that new reality has taken the shape of a much enlarged United Nations whose membership has risen to such an extent that it has become necessary to reconsider its structures and its major organs, especially the Security Council whose composition must reflect the new reality of the enlarged United Nations membership on whose behalf it acts, as stipulated by Article 24 of the Charter.

In addition, there are several other reasons which make it necessary to increase the membership of the Security Council:

Firstly, the principal role the Security Council has come to play in international affairs and the far-reaching effects of its resolutions on the Member States. None of this can elicit satisfaction or evoke acceptance unless there is a greater degree of participation by the States Members that ensures the adoption of Security Council resolutions through wider participation by and more equitable representation of the Organization's membership.

Secondly, the present composition of the Security Council is not consonant with paragraph 1 of Article 23 of the Charter, which stipulates that due regard shall be paid in determining the membership of the Council to the principle of equitable geographical distribution. The Security Council's present composition is not in line with this principle as a single geographic group monopolizes the greatest number of seats at the expense of the other geographic groups.

Thirdly, the United Nations at the present time is undergoing a phase of radical reform that is almost total in its scope. The General Assembly has reduced the number of its committees and persistent efforts are being deployed to reform and restructure the United Nations in the social, economic and other related spheres. It is only logical that such reforms should embrace the Security Council, the organ that performs a principal role in United Nations activities, namely the maintenance of international peace and security.

In the general debate that took place during the last session of the General Assembly, my delegation defined its position on the issue of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. My delegation was among those who sponsored resolution 47/62 adopted by the General Assembly and was in the forefront of those who commented on it. The present debate by the General Assembly provides us with an opportunity to reaffirm yet again the position that we have already taken in this respect.

Our comments on resolution 47/62 fundamentally stressed that any increase in the membership of the Security Council should not be partial or biased in favour

of a certain group of the Organization's membership. We stressed that the increase should ensure representation of Member States on the Security Council in conformity with the principle of equitable geographical distribution and guarantee the Security Council's effectiveness in performing the role mandated to it by the Charter.

Here I should like to state that my delegation rejects any tendency to obstruct the increase of the Security Council's membership under the pretext that such increase would impede the Council's functioning or limit its effectiveness.

Just as we attach great importance to the issue of equitable representation on the Security Council, we attach the same importance to reforming the Council and to improving its procedures. That is why my delegation has presented definite proposals to the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization. In line with those proposals, we believe that it is of the greatest importance for the efforts being deployed towards increasing the Security Council's membership to be accompanied by an examination of the ways and means whereby the Council's working methods may be improved and all the obstacles that impede its proper functioning may be eliminated so that it may perform the role mandated to it by the Charter.

My delegation is aware of the recent proposals by the Council in document S/26176. However we think that those proposals are insufficient. We believe that there is a clear case for introducing other measures that would ensure transparency in the work of the Council. In particular, consultations must be held concerning the draft resolutions proposed for adoption; also, the States concerned must be allowed to participate fully in those consultations in order for them to be able to adequately express their views and positions.

In addition, the Council must find a way to inform United Nations Member States properly of the results of its consultations. Informal consultations now represent the bulk of the Council's work and figure prominently in the adoption of its resolutions. This may be said to be helpful to the Council in reaching speedy agreement. However, my delegation finds that the increased exclusivity of such consultations, which have become a kind of private club for certain privileged members, is harmful to the functioning of the Council as certain permanent members of the Council have exploited this method to impose their will and achieve their purposes. Thus, such States have made of the Security Council an organ that no longer deals with international issues according to the will of the majority of United Nations Member States, but rather in line with the designs and special interests of certain States.

My country has consistently advocated the reviewing of certain texts that govern the activities of the Security Council and, in particular, the veto privilege. This stance stems from belief in a fundamental principle, namely the principle of equal sovereignty which this privilege negates. There is also the fact that there is no longer any justification for retaining that privilege. The circumstances under which it was granted, almost 50 years ago, no longer exist. Many new States have emerged on the international scene, while old colonial empires have disappeared with their designs and their special interests.

The events of the past 40 years have shown that the right of veto has in fact frustrated many efforts that aimed at settling disputes and at promoting international security. The truth of the matter is that this privilege has developed into a real obstacle to the role mandated to the Security Council, namely the maintenance of international peace and security. The cases in which recourse was made to the veto have demonstrated that it has been used, in most cases, not in the service of principles, but in the service of special interests. We are aware that the veto has not been used over the past few years. However, we should warn that this is no guarantee that it will not be used again, especially if one of the veto States becomes party to a dispute.

We are seeing a revival of the role of the United Nations. Its burdens are increasing as the international community seeks to correct the imbalances of the international order and tries to lay the foundations of a new order of justice and equality that would embrace all the States Members of the United Nations. We believe that these aspirations will never be realized so long as the functioning of the Security Council, which has the principal mandate of maintaining international peace and security remains hostage to the dictates of one State that has the power to veto its resolutions whenever it has to. That is why the call for reforming the Council and removing the impediments that obstruct its proper functioning is widening and gaining momentum. All this shows that the time has come to reconsider certain provisions of the Charter, in particular the provision dealing with the right of veto, a right that should be abolished or, at least, strictly restricted.

In conclusion, my delegation wishes to assert once again that the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council is an urgent matter for the reasons I have stated as well as for the other reasons set out by previous speakers in this debate. At the same time, my delegation reaffirms that it is of the greatest importance for the Security Council to work in a manner that is compatible with the principles of the Charter and with the mandate entrusted to it by the Charter, without in any way

infringing upon the mandates of other international organs. In so doing, the Security Council should adopt an objective approach and should never opt for double standards or selectivity in dealing with the issues it deals with. There are many instances that show that the Council opted for a discriminatory approach whereby it insisted, in certain cases, on the enforcement of its resolutions while, in other cases, it showed no such determination, even in the face of naked defiance of its authority.

My delegation should like to reaffirm that there is a pressing need for reconsidering the Security Council's membership and for reforming its procedures. We do hope that this will take place by the advent of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, so that the Organization may gain new momentum and a new vision in striving for the achievement of its objectives.

Mr. QADER (Bangladesh): The international political landscape has gone through a sea of changes since the establishment of the United Nations. The United Nations, as an international organization of Member States of the global community, is nearing its fiftieth year with the attainment of near universality of its membership. The nature and content of the changes in international relations have been in one respect so positive that today the Members of the United Nations not only find Article 107 and parts of Articles 53 and 77 of the United Nations Charter redundant, but are thinking of according the objects of these Articles a special role in the United Nations itself.

Thematically, the world today is being swept by the egalitarian and humanizing impacts of democratic concepts and practices. The last hardened vestiges of trade barriers are being dismantled to pave the way for genuine free trade. And there is an acknowledged preference for and reliance on multilateral negotiations to transform this complex world of diverse communities into a global village of amity in a mosaic of cultural diversity. These can be times of great developments and beneficial changes, provided we keep the fundamental purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter in the proper perspective and do not deviate from them.

When the United Nations rose like a phoenix from the ruins of the League of Nations and through the ashes of the Second World War, the foremost human concern was rightly embedded in upholding the concepts of peace and security. The Security Council was accordingly created by the framers of the United Nations to work as the prime instrument for maintaining international peace and security so that its other organs might go about their work in an enabling environment of peace and security, the lack of which had haunted humanity over previous centuries.

The concept of permanent membership with veto powers was a recognition of the imperatives of that time and the pressing need to maintain international peace and security. Today, nearly 50 years later, with an abundance of varied experiences of success and failure, the international community is in a position to review and reform the role of various United Nations organs, and particularly that of the Security Council, in the light of the current global *elan* of democratic aspirations and the near universality of the Organization's membership, with a view to making it more democratic, representative, effective, efficient and credible to the peoples of the world.

The Security Council in 1945 had a membership of 11, including five permanent members, out of a total membership of 51, giving it a ratio of one to nearly five members of the General Assembly. In 1965, when membership reached 113, the Security Council had 15 members - a ratio of one Security Council member to almost seven and a half members of the General Assembly. Today, therefore, there is an imperative need for a commensurate expansion of the Security Council. We have no specific suggestions on what its new strength should be, but we believe that a ratio of one to eight would be fair, without compromising the Council's effectiveness. But we should go about this process in an equitable manner, considering all relevant factors necessary in an expansion of such a nature.

The increase in the membership of the Security Council would be only one aspect of its democratic transformation. The other essential aspect of democratization would be to ensure the transparency of its work and its accountability to the General Assembly. Accordingly, we call for changes in its current procedures for reporting to the Assembly and for the suitable reform of these procedures, including the presentation of summary records of its proceedings to the General Assembly.

We are aware of the burning democratic aspirations of "the peoples of the United Nations" and thus do not call for the immediate abolition of the power of veto, but we believe that fixing a timetable for its gradual elimination would be very desirable, especially when some permanent members are losing the heart to face the fires of conflicts and when some are using their veto power, or the threat to use it, to prevent others from carrying out the objectives of the Charter. Since democracy is a sacrosanct concept for us, we cannot accept any addition to the privileged class of those with veto power, nor would we consider creating a new class of semi-permanent or permanent members without veto power to be a democratic and positive step, as such a measure obviously would be undemocratic and elitist.

We believe that the prerequisite for retaining or earning membership in the Security Council should be the performance - and the performance alone - of the candidates in their commitment to upholding the stated purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, and, more specifically, their role in upholding the objectives and principles laid out in Articles 23, 24 and 26 of the Charter. In fact, we should devise a way to evaluate the track record of performance by Members of the United Nations.

Considering the irresistible push for democratization of the United Nations organs and the equally important need to get the job done in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and international law, we think that the time has come urgently to form an open-ended working group to look into different aspects of the reform of the Security Council, as has been suggested by some of the previous speakers. That group should submit its report to the Secretary-General at the earliest possible time, preferably by the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly, so that the fiftieth session can usher in a reformed Security Council, in time for the golden jubilee of the United Nations.

Those were our preliminary observations on the very important subject of the Security Council, on whose credibility, effective and efficient functioning depends the security of Member States - especially that of the weaker ones.

Mr. SHAHID (Maldives): Fundamental changes have taken place on the international scene since the founding of the United Nations. We have witnessed the end of the cold war, which was itself a legacy of the Second World War - the war that led to the formation of this Organization. Several territories under colonial rule have emerged as new States. Other States that were part of a union, such as the Soviet Union and the former Yugoslavia, have become independent. These nations have now joined this Organization, taking us further in our common endeavour to make the United Nations universal.

The United Nations is on the threshold of its fiftieth anniversary. There can be no doubt that the purposes and principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter are as valid today as they were in 1945, notwithstanding the fact that the character of the world has substantially altered since then. However, many of the organs required to preserve the Charter are in need of reform and restructuring. These reforms should reflect the changes that have taken place internationally and should be aimed at making these organs more responsive to current realities.

In this connection, restructuring and reforming the Security Council has become imperative. The Security Council is the United Nations organ with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. In recent years it has become evident that the Security Council can in fact function in the manner originally intended by the authors of the Charter. No doubt, the end of the cold war and of ideological politics was the major contributor. These developments on the international security scene came as reassurance to the smaller countries of the international community. Regrettably, however, the high level of credibility which the Council managed to gain in the immediate aftermath of the cold war and the Gulf war was short-lived. This, perhaps, is partly due to the Council's inability to function consistently on all issues and partly due to the fact that the membership of the Council does not reflect the dramatic changes that have taken place internationally.

In 1946 the United Nations had 51 Members, of which six were non-permanent members of the Security Council. The non-permanent membership of the Council was expanded in 1963 to 10 to correspond to the increase in the membership of the Organization to 113. Today, the membership of the United Nations totals 184. My Government feels that once again the membership of the Council should be increased to reflect the change. However, the utmost caution and circumspection should be exercised in carrying out such a process. It will be a most critical reform process, one on which the future of this Organization depends, and will involve the most fundamental aspects of its purposes and functions.

Maldives is of the view that any expansion in the membership of the Security Council and its status should be based on the principle of equitable and balanced representation. Such an expansion should be carried out in a manner which will assist in increasing the Council's moral authority by giving the small and medium-sized States a greater opportunity to participate in its work as well. The reform process should also ensure the enhancement of the Council's efficiency. In this regard, my delegation endorses the establishment of an open-ended working group to adequately address all issues, including the formulation of the basis or criteria for selection of any new members.

The question of permanent members and the right of veto is a key issue. In addressing that issue, we have to fully understand that privileges come with additional responsibilities and obligations. As the Security Council is the organ of the United Nations with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, its members, especially the permanent ones, should be willing to accept additional responsibilities and obligations in that connection and in making the United Nations more effective and efficient. It is important to

highlight the fact that the question of the permanent members and the right of veto should be addressed without prejudice to the efficiency and effectiveness of the work of the Council.

Small States are a reality of the family of nations today. My delegation recognizes that small States are particularly vulnerable to external threats and acts of interference in their internal affairs and that such States have special needs consonant with the right to sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. The best guarantee for the security of small States lies in the Charter of the United Nations, which assigns the primary responsibility of maintaining international peace and security to the Security Council. Therefore, small States, such as mine, have an inherent interest in ensuring an effective and efficient Security Council.

We should be careful not to approach the question of reforming and restructuring the Security Council in a piecemeal fashion and should be firm in our refusal to accept suggestions for changes of a cosmetic nature. We should formulate principled criteria that would reflect the political, economic and demographic realities of the world today. My delegation calls upon all States to engage constructively in this process with a degree of flexibility and in a spirit of compromise and willingness to work towards consensus. On behalf of my delegation, I assure the Assembly that we will extend our full cooperation in order to achieve this end.

Mr. VENECIA (Philippines): I wish to join other delegations in thanking the Secretary-General for the timely presentation of his report (A/48/264) on this agenda item, prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 47/62.

The Philippines believes the time has come for serious reflection and debate on the related issues of the reform and the expansion of the membership of the Security Council. It is a fact that the Security Council remains the least representative and least democratic of the principal organs of the United Nations. While other principal organs and bodies of the United Nations are actively seeking to restructure or revitalize themselves in order to respond to a changing world, the rising tide of democracy and growing United Nations membership, the Council's structure and decision-making procedures have not been significantly adapted or reformed, despite the fact that the Council has never been more active and assertive than it is today.

We therefore look forward to the adoption of a decision establishing an open-ended working group to examine key aspects of this issue in the framework of Articles 23 and 24 of the Charter.

In this regard, the Philippines, in its response to the Secretary-General's request, stated that it welcomed a comprehensive exchange of views on this matter. I stress the word "comprehensive" because any discussion of expanded membership of the Council will inevitably have a bearing on the interrelated issues of the Council's methods of work, enhancement of the effectiveness and transparency of its functioning, and improved accountability to and coordination with the General Assembly.

At this stage, my delegation believes that the following matters related to the Security Council should be fully taken into account when considering the question of increasing the Council's membership.

Inasmuch as the Council acts on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations in matters pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security, it is imperative that Council decisions, which have a bearing on international peace and security, have the support and confidence of the general membership. This is the only way to ensure the credibility of the Council's decisions and actions. Hence, any decision on increasing the membership of the Council must be conducive to the fulfilment of this need. Failure to do so would eventually weaken the Council's moral authority and effectiveness.

Another means of enhancing the Council's moral authority would be to ensure that its actions relating to peace and security conform to the purposes and principles of the Charter. To be precise, they should abide by, and not go beyond, the mandate of the Charter, specifically under Chapter I. Above all, the Council's decisions should reflect the will of the Member States and should not create the impression that they serve as geopolitical instruments for projecting the interests of a limited group of Member States.

An expanded Council should act decisively and in a timely fashion. However, one should not necessarily equate efficiency with smaller numbers. Effectiveness or efficiency results when all actors cooperate fully and share responsibilities, as appropriate, with a view to achieving a specific objective. Once again, this involves, essentially, enhancing the trust and confidence of Member States in the Council. Without trust, it is difficult to conceive of an effective Council.

The Philippines is prepared to discuss any proposal on criteria for new members, though we maintain that a key criterion for new membership should be equitable

geographical representation. This is the most fundamental democratic basis for membership.

It is important that any increased membership in the Council should duly reflect the increasing membership of the United Nations. We are prepared to exchange ideas on the appropriate size and categories of membership, including, if appropriate, new categories. In so doing, we shall be guided by consideration of whatever size will lead to improved functioning and transparency of the Council.

We believe any increase in the membership of the Council should also be accompanied by greater involvement and participation on the part of non-members in the Council's decision-making process, through more open, more transparent, more regular and structured consultations between Council members and the General Assembly. The present informal and closed consultations should be replaced by an open-ended structure.

There is an urgent need to improve coordination between the Security Council and the General Assembly on matters relating to international peace and security. This would lead to greater balance in the work of these organs on such issues.

A general debate on the veto power - the need for it, modification or use of it, particularly in the context of an expanded membership of the Council - would also be useful.

Ultimately, the reform and expansion of the membership of the Council should be viewed in the larger context of the ongoing process of the democratization, revitalization and restructuring of the United Nations in response to new international realities. Moreover, given the interlinkages of the principal United Nations organs, in both the institutional and the political sense, changes in one organ will eventually have substantive effects on others. It would therefore be crucial to take these interrelationships into account.

While we concern ourselves with ways and means of reinforcing and improving the structure and machinery of the Security Council, it would be well and timely for us to give serious thought to the scarcely mentioned but chronic and nettling problem of investing the United Nations with visible and credible police power for effectively maintaining international peace and security. The Security Council makes policy decisions on issues and problems of international peace and order. It renders fateful and crucial decisions on United Nations intervention in armed conflicts. It commits the Organization to enforcement action; yet it is woefully bereft of such power. This matter is central to the collective security system, which has been placed under the auspices of the United Nations by world public opinion, history and tradition, and it alone holds out hope of defence against aggression to small and defenceless nations.

In one of the great debates in the session of the United Nations General Assembly held in Paris in 1948, two eminent Asian diplomats and statesmen took turns arguing that the United Nations must have commensurate police power to perform its primary mission, which is to keep peace. I invoke today the memory of General Carlos P. Romulo and Dr. Adam Malik to focus attention on a geopolitical imperative the United Nations can ignore only at its peril.

We believe that a complex and challenging task lies ahead. Any decision on this subject should be adopted only after thorough consideration by Member States and should fully address the issues I have just raised. This is the only way to ensure a meaningful, fair and equitable result; this is the only way our debate can move forward.

Mr. CARDENAS (Argentina) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The "Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council", which was introduced in 1979 by several delegations including that of the Republic of Argentina, has generated an unusual degree of activity this year.

This of course reflects the changes that are taking place in international relations. Today, we are still actors in the quest for a new international balance based, we believe, on factors which are promising in the sense that the international community can take full advantage of them.

In the last four years, this Organization has had to confront a number of crises which affected international peace and security. Many of these crises have been defused by the action of the Security Council and the commitment of the international community to provide the human and economic resources to the effort to maintain international peace and security.

Last year we unanimously adopted resolution 47/62, which made it possible for States Members of the United Nations to submit to the Secretary-General their written observations on the question of a possible revision of the composition of the Security Council. These replies, including that of the Republic of Argentina, are contained in document A/48/264 and its addenda.

The replies - which varied considerably and often contained innovative suggestions that we shall in due course consider in the working group to be set up -

demonstrate, on the other hand, a common concern among the Members of our Organization: a desire to improve and strengthen the effectiveness of the organ entrusted with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

It is difficult to imagine that we can make any progress in our consideration of this item without studying a series of related aspects to a change in the membership of the Council that serve to strengthen that principal organ within the framework established by the United Nations Charter.

The position of the Republic of Argentina, which is contained in the aforementioned reply submitted pursuant to resolution 47/62, can be summarized as follows:

First, pursuant to the Charter, we advocate an increase in the number of non-permanent members that would ensure adequate representation of Member States and an equitable geographic distribution among all regions, without prejudice to the Council's flexibility or efficiency or diminishing its effectiveness.

Secondly, we believe that any reform of the United Nations Charter and, in this specific case, any reform designed eventually to restructure the Security Council, must be carried out on the basis of a broad and solid consensus.

We are already aware of the general framework of the draft resolution which would set up an open-ended working group to consider all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to that organ.

We believe that, among others, the following criteria which are included in that framework should duly be taken into account in future work on this matter: first, the need to continue improving the effectiveness of the Council; second, recognition that the Council, in exercising its primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, acts on behalf of all Members; third, the selection criteria explicitly set out in Article 23 of the Charter; fourth, the principle of sovereign equality of States as stipulated in Article 2 of the Charter; and, fifth, recognition of the importance of achieving general agreement.

Beginning next year, we shall embark upon an intense but fascinating task - and without rushing but without resting - within the framework of a wide-ranging debate in which all Member States can unhesitatingly express their points of view, and in successive steps arrive at a consensual agreement which will fashion an ordered, egalitarian and equitable Security Council to confront effectively the challenges of this new age.

My delegation undertakes to participate actively and constructively in the working group to be established - giving priority, of course, to our national interests together with those of our region.

Mr. LAMAMRA (Algeria) (*interpretation from French*): On the initiative of a limited number of countries, among which I am happy to mention Algeria and Guyana, the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security was inscribed on the agenda of the General Assembly in 1979. This appeal by the international community, which was timely then and is even more so today, has for 12 years gone for the most part unheeded, for reasons which there is no need to go into here but which can easily be linked, in part, to the conflictive political atmosphere during the cold war period.

It was not until its forty-sixth session, in 1991, that the General Assembly was able to hold its first debate on this important issue, a debate which gave rise to a remarkable resurgence of interest in the problem of the expansion of the Security Council and which triggered a dynamic process of individual and collective reflection by Member States on the action to be taken. That dynamic process, which gave rise to much creativity and numerous proposals, was expressed with particular eloquence in the Secretary-General's report through a considerable number of observations and suggestions by Member States, on which the General Assembly should build in order to move ahead in harmony and with clarity.

The first conclusion to be drawn from this report has to do with the unusually high number of States that have felt it necessary to make their views on this question known. An analysis of the answers received from Member States clearly shows general agreement in favour of increasing the number of members of the Security Council, which thus becomes a well-established need. The arguments put forward in favour of such an increase generally overlap, since they are based simultaneously on the need for the composition of the Security Council to reflect a satisfactory ratio with the increase in the number of States Members of the United Nations and on the need to respond to the widely expressed wish for greater participation which would make the Security Council more representative so that it can be in a better position to act, in accordance with Article 24 of the United Nations Charter, on behalf of the States Members of the Organization that have entrusted it with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Mr. Soh (Republic of Korea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Small States - States like mine - are in the best position to be the moral conscience of our institution, as, historically, they have had a tangential material interest in the outcome of many disputes brought before the Council. But of greater importance is the fact that the survival of small States will depend on our having a representative Security Council. If small States are to be assured of more than passive-spectator status in this parliament of parliaments, the criteria for membership of the Security Council cannot make reference to economic clout or population size.

Antigua and Barbuda could not, therefore, be a party to any consensus resolution that implicitly conditioned membership on size and/or economic worth. We have sacrificed much to secure this sovereignty, and we shall do everything in our power to ensure its continuance. The role of the Security Council in ensuring our sovereignty cannot be discounted.

My delegation is of the view that if we are to safeguard for small States an active role in the Security Council, and if we are to ensure equitable geographical representation, the distribution of the membership of an enlarged Council should be along the following lines: for the African States, one permanent and six non-permanent seats; for the Asian States, two permanent and three non-permanent seats; for the Eastern European States, one permanent and two non-permanent seats; for the Latin American and Caribbean States, one permanent and three non-permanent seats; and for the Western European and other States, three permanent and three non-permanent seats.

With a membership of 25, the Security Council could thus be deemed equitably representative of the various regional and geographical groups that comprise the General Assembly. At the same time, its composition would allow for the participation, during each meeting, of States of varying sizes and from different regions. We believe that this distribution would be fair and just and that the institution would still be very manageable.

We hope that these changes can be instituted during the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Mr. JARAMILLO (Colombia) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: General Assembly resolution 47/62 was the point of departure for this fundamental process of reforming the Security Council. Colombia was a sponsor of that resolution, and we believe that, indeed, it represented explicit recognition by the international community of the need to reform the Council and to restate various questions relating to its mandate and its functioning.

Today the United Nations has 184 Members, as opposed to the 51 original States that signed the San Francisco Charter and the 113 Members of 1963. The political, economic and military realities that predominated during the post-war period were fundamentally different from those of today. That situation served as the basis for the composition of the Council in 1945 and for the exceptional prerogative of the privileged right of veto - unique in multilateral organizations - for the countries that were victorious in the Second World War. The truth is that, today, some of those countries have completely lost the political, economic and military importance that was used to justify their privileged position at that time.

Colombia welcomes with optimism the new era of cooperation that is evident here at the United Nations, but we are concerned at the fact that the paralysis that characterized the Security Council during the cold-war era seems to have given way to activity that recognizes no limits or restrictions.

The current permanent membership of the Security Council includes States that should not be permanent members, while States that should be permanent members are not included. Colombia therefore considers it necessary that the Council be reformed. In our view, it is timely and relevant for the General Assembly to begin consideration of the various aspects of such a reform. We believe that specific formulas in this connection should be submitted before 1995.

I should like to refer briefly to some of the aspects that should be studied - for example, the membership of the Council, the right of veto, the functioning of the Council, and the Council's relationship with other organs and with Members of the Organization.

A balanced increase in the membership of the Security Council has now become an imperative, given the international realities. Such an increase should reflect the number of States that are now Members of the Organization and the realities of the new international situation in all its aspects, and the distribution should be fair to all the existing regional groups. In any event, the developing countries must be adequately represented.

It seems to us that the criteria set forth in Article 23 of the Charter are still fully viable, as they are broad and flexible - a fact that reflects the wisdom of those who drafted the Charter. Any change in the membership of the Council must be balanced. In other words, an increase for

some regions only would be contrary to the criteria to which I have referred and would be contrary to the spirit that should prevail in any revision of the Charter.

The veto privilege was controversial from the very beginning - not only because it is contrary to the principle of the sovereign equality of States but also because it is a mechanism of non-cooperation in a system of collective security where cooperation is a requirement. In San Francisco, Colombia voted against the veto because we regarded it as contrary to the spirit of cooperation between nations, which was a fundamental prerequisite of the Charter in 1945.

Today the veto has lost its *raison d'être*. In any case, an increase in the membership of the Security Council must not be used to justify additional members with the power of veto. In the current situation, that would be unjustifiable. It would be contrary to the progressive spirit of democratization that must inspire this new era of the United Nations. Clearly, any change in the voting procedure - including the veto - is subject to the majorities set forth in the Charter and confirmed in the Security Council's rules of procedure. It is because the relevant Articles of the Charter have no basis in the world of today that the question of their revision arises. In this regard, flexibility and consensus among the permanent members will, of course, be decisive. In the absence of such flexibility and consensus, the international community could even question the very authority of the Security Council.

Obviously some hesitation has been felt in various quarters because of the need to preserve the Council's effectiveness. That legitimate concern, which the Algerian delegation fully shares, should not, however, because of some unfortunate antagonism between "effectiveness" and "representation", rule out plans to expand the Council. It would be far more fruitful to view those two premises as complementary, in the sense that a Security Council with a suitably expanded membership would better represent the diversity of the Organization's Member States and would therefore be taking its decisions in harmony with the general will of the Member States. That would obviously contribute to obtaining widespread adherence to those decisions and, thereby, to improving the effectiveness of the Council itself.

Algeria has expressed its views, contained in document A/48/264/Add.1, on a set of parameters and factors it views as part of the overall problem of equitable representation on the Security Council, as well as on the related factors that would be involved in a timely and positive effort to reform the way the Council functions and improve its relationships with other principal United Nations organs.

In the framework of this debate I should like to emphasize the following guidelines to be borne in mind in any exercise of collective thinking on the subject of achieving equitable representation on the Security Council, which would mark a new point of departure for the United Nations.

First, in contrast to the selective steps taken in 1963 to 1965 in a context of East-West antagonism and at a time when the decolonization process was speeding up, the reform of the Security Council required by today's world and tomorrow's needs must be based both on the near-universality of the United Nations and on such key factors as the indivisible nature of international peace and security, the clear interdependence of economic systems and the strengthening of multilateralism on the global and regional levels, as well as on the variety of ways in which States can contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security beyond the basic contributions inherent in their economic and military capabilities.

Secondly, contrary to the approach that obtained in the aftermath of the Second World War, it is important today not to give in to the temptation to consecrate, through an expansion of the Security Council, present-day power relationships but, rather, to seek to work out a system of representation that does not marginalize the Southern Hemisphere of the planet.

Thirdly, given the marked trend towards an ever-increasing use of consensus in the functioning of the Security Council, certain institutional vestiges of the past, such as the veto power, should be reviewed in the light of the new requirements created by the democratization of the Organization, rather than consolidated and extended by renewing its legitimacy.

Fourthly, without prejudice to the principle of the sovereign equality of United Nations Member States, the existence of new geopolitical, regional, cultural or other groupings that contribute to the maintenance of international peace and security must be used to supplement the traditional representation by individual States with a new kind of representation by groups of States forming regional organizations or joined together by regional agreements, such as the Organization of Africa Unity and the League of Arab States, whose leaderships have already taken similar stands.

Fifthly, the concept of equitable representation on the Security Council implies that, above and beyond Council membership at a given moment, any Member State must be

able to participate in the decision-making process on questions which affect its interests or on which its views might enlighten the Council. That concept also implies that United Nations Member States, collectively represented by the General Assembly, can give guidance to the Security Council and should be in a position, by considering its reports, to evaluate its discharge of its mandate on the basis of the contractual relationship established in Article 24 of the United Nations Charter.

Lastly, that same concept of equitable representation implies some monitoring of the constitutionality of the Council's actions, and that this monitoring is within the General Assembly's competence.

The United Nations, which has through so many long years of confrontation served as the last hope of so many peoples whose faith in the institution has never wavered, now has the opportunity to make its fiftieth anniversary a high point marked both by its renewal and by its preparedness to confront the new millennium. It is thus important that we plan for it actively. A framework for work and open and transparent negotiation on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council must be established to undertake the painstaking process of reconciling differing points of view, a process that Algeria, which will participate in it, hopes will be constructive and fruitful.

Mr. HURST (Antigua and Barbuda): My delegation is compelled to add its voice to the din of proposals which have been heard from this rostrum today on the history-making question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

When Antigua and Barbuda spoke in the general debate in the General Assembly on 8 October we noted that our small island country harboured no ambitions to sit on the Security Council. Nevertheless, we considered this agenda item to be of such fundamental importance that we were compelled to express our deeply held views.

We maintain, for example, that Security Council decision-making will be the major factor in fashioning a new world order, now that the paralysis of the cold war is over. New evils will emerge to bedevil international peace and security now that the cold war, the problem of the colour bar, and colonialism have been largely conquered. The Security Council will thus have to be a very responsive, yet manageable, body, capable of reflecting and reacting firmly to new challenges while creating just and new international law.

The size of the Council would thus be a factor in its responsiveness, but so too would be its composition. We note, for example, that nearly 40 small island States are Members of this 184-nation parliament. With all due regard to the fairness of large and wealthy States whose representatives sit on the Council permanently and on a rotating basis, we believe that the interests and concerns of small States can best be articulated and promoted by one who knows first hand both the strengths and the weaknesses of smallness.

Specific proposals should be formulated, limiting the veto to decisions taken under Chapter VII, or replacing it with qualified majorities; or even overriding it by establishing an appeal mechanism through the General Assembly, with a qualified vote.

The Security Council has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under Article 24 of the Charter, and it exercises that responsibility on behalf of all the States Members of the Organization. This implies political responsibility *vis-à-vis* the Assembly. At such a crucial moment in the history of the United Nations, the Security Council must be respected for its integrity and its effectiveness, and it is essential that its members enjoy the trust of the other States Members of the Organization. The Council's effectiveness in discharging this task depends to a large extent on the legitimacy of its decisions and the level of consistency in implementing them in accordance with the principles and provisions of the Charter.

Moreover, there is also a widespread view that the Council has gradually been expanding its powers in such a way as to encroach on the jurisdictions of other organs in the system. To that end, the Council makes use of an increasingly broad and liberal interpretation of the concept of "a threat to international peace and security". The validity of the decisions of the Council is very closely linked to their acceptance by the Member States; yet there is such controversy about its decisions and about the interpretation of the Charter that its legitimacy is being seriously challenged. Colombia stated its position on this very clearly some weeks ago, when the Assembly considered the report of the Security Council, and we believe that the General Assembly must engage in some thorough reflection on this matter.

We have also said that constant use of Chapter VII of the Charter by the Council constitutes exaggerated use, and this approach must be limited and corrected, since the Organization has tools other than force that can and should be used in finding peaceful settlements to disputes. We cannot run the risk of being associated with force, belligerency or coercion. We must, rather, be identified with the peaceful, political and diplomatic settlement of conflicts through a greater use of Chapter VI of the

Charter, which is simply preventive diplomacy. The Council must therefore exhaust those methods before having recourse to the enforcement measures provided for in the Charter as extraordinary and exceptional means.

We also have to assess the functioning of the Council, particularly in respect of the informal consultations and the transparency of its work. These informal consultations, which are secret and without records, are becoming the daily, permanent practice of the Council. While it is true that they can promote timely and speedy actions and to greater openness in national positions - a situation that could lead to better ways of achieving compromise - it is also true that their merits is exaggerated, because many of them lack the confidentiality and the political sensitivity that originally justified them. We do not believe that the effectiveness of the Council can be compromised if lesser use is made of this mechanism; on the contrary, we believe that the legitimacy of its decisions could be questioned if there were continued misuse of this practice.

In view of what I have said, Colombia believes that the General Assembly should study the matters to which I have referred with a view to submitting specific recommendations, preferably before the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. Hence, we believe that establishing an open-ended working group to deal with all of these questions that have been raised is the most appropriate way of doing that. Such a group would have a broad and flexible mandate that would enable it to consider all matters relating to reform of the Council, as set out in the report of the Secretary-General (A/48/264 and Add.1-4). These include membership, functioning, and the relationship between the Council and the General Assembly.

I would like to mention just a few of the factors that are of basic importance to Colombia in this process.

First, the Council's membership should be increased in order to make it better able to respond to crises and would facilitate participation by small- and medium-sized States, which are the majority of the Members of this Organization. This would enhance the Council's representative character and its moral authority.

Secondly, the Council should adhere strictly to the mandate and the spheres of competences set forth for this body in the Charter of the United Nations.

Thirdly, we should consider the possibility of establishing a body to carry out jurisdictional monitoring of the actions of the Security Council. The Council is not an organ that enjoys absolute sovereignty in carrying out its functions; it is subject to the rules and principles of international law and to the provisions of the Charter that set it up. In national systems the separation and balance of powers are generally accepted, and this approach should be taken in the international sphere. Such monitoring would not only promote the progressive development of law and an improvement would enhance the international system, but would also ensure the legality of the Council's decisions.

Fourthly, there should be an improvement in the way that the Security Council reports to the Assembly; under Article 15 of the Charter, the Council should report to the Assembly in an analytical and exhaustive manner, including through monthly reports at the time when the presidency of the Council rotates.

Fifthly, the Council should not deal with and take decisions on matters selectively, and there should be consistency in decision-making and in ensuring implementation in accordance with international law.

Lastly, there should be transparency in the Council's work, and there must be more consultations and communication between the members of the Council and the other Members of the Organization. It is essential that the members of the Council be receptive to the other Members of the United Nations, and in particular that the Council abide by, respect and comply with the resolutions of the General Assembly. Only thus can the Council maintain its credibility and integrity and that of the United Nations as a whole.

The working group thus established should meet between the sessions of the General Assembly and should report regularly to the Assembly on its activities. Colombia is willing to participate actively in such a group and to make specific proposals, out of a desire to contribute to an improved United Nations and in particular to a Security Council that is balanced, effective, legitimate and responsible.

Ms. MATHURIN MAIR (Jamaica): My delegation welcomed resolution 47/62 on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. The unanimous adoption of that resolution last year now enables this important issue to be at last considered by the General Assembly. Such consideration is long overdue.

It was 30 years ago that the General Assembly first addressed the issue of the numerical composition of the Security Council and then decided that it should be enlarged from its original membership of 11 to 15. That action was designed to reflect, in some degree, the doubling of the membership of the United Nations since its

inception, and to facilitate a more appropriate representation of the newly independent nations. In that year, 1963, there were 113 States Members of the United Nations.

The international call for a review of the composition of the Security Council appeared again on the agenda of the General Assembly at its thirty-fourth session, and for over a decade since then it has been subject to deferral year after year. Today, such a review is urgent and imperative, given the present membership of 184 States and the profound changes that characterize the post-cold-war world.

New configurations, multiple crises and new agenda items all challenge conventional perceptions of security and of sovereignty, and challenge the United Nations in unprecedented ways. Within that global context, resolution 47/62 appropriately locates this item within the ongoing, system-wide process of revitalizing and restructuring the United Nations, for the world today, threatened by crises and conflicts in every region, looks to the United Nations to address the scenario of escalating disorder.

The Security Council, the paramount organ of the United Nations, should therefore provide a model of global governance. Its processes and procedures should be rational; they should be credible; they should be effective. It is as important to consider not only how that body is constituted but also how it functions.

My delegation is therefore at one with the views that have been expressed by many speakers today that the open-ended working group that is to be established to consider the issue should therefore receive a broad mandate, not limited to issues merely of enlargement - for which there is an obvious rationale - but to the Council's total *modus operandi*. It should scrutinize and advise on issues of transparency, accountability, the exercise of the veto, and, most critically, the issue of the Council's relationship with the General Assembly, the universally representative body of the world's Governments and peoples dedicated to advancing the principle of democratic participation in all aspects of its operations and from which the Council derives its power.

My delegation will participate in the work of that group, where we anticipate that all relevant issues will receive frank and constructive consideration.

I shall mention, briefly, just one such issue. On the question of equitable geographical representation, one must face squarely the issue of permanent *vis-à-vis* non-permanent membership.

With respect to the question of permanent membership, one could indeed argue, and agree, that because the maintenance of peace and security requires considerable financial and military resources which some States are better placed to provide than others, recognition of this fact has justified conferring permanent membership on those States possessing such resources and are thereby capable of undertaking special responsibilities, and one could consider that such responsibilities would also imply special status and privileges.

But an increase in permanent membership should also ensure that broader political and economic interests are better represented than they are at present. In this context, as current analyses of the multiple socio-economic and political sources of insecurity and conflict make clear, the role of regional organizations - in which many small States actively participate - becomes more important. Chapter VIII of the Charter validates this role, and "An Agenda for Peace" reaffirms the capability of regional institutions as potentially effective actors in the processes of, for example, preventive diplomacy and conflict and post-conflict resolution.

This points to the feasibility of formal recognition of regional bodies as entities to be considered for permanent seats on the Security Council.

Reforms designed to address such issues can in no way undermine the status and the functioning of the Council as an effective mechanism in the maintenance of global peace and security; on the contrary, the application of democratic values both to the composition and to the procedures of the Council can only enhance its legitimacy and its moral authority.

Finally, my delegation supports the view of those who wish to see this process completed by the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. We shall participate, with that goal in mind, as is best appropriate, keeping in mind also the overall motto of that fiftieth anniversary - "We the Peoples of the United Nations ... United for a Better World" - and we see an enhanced and more effective role for the Security Council in achieving that goal.

Mrs. FRÉCHETTE (Canada): We are about to undertake one of the most important and delicate tasks of the General Assembly at this forty-eighth session, that of considering the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council.

This is an important task because more than 70 Member States from all regions have expressed their interest in this issue by submitting substantial and detailed

comments to the Secretary-General in accordance with resolution 47/62, which comments we have all had the opportunity to examine.

This is also a delicate task, because this issue affects the organ of the United Nations upon which is conferred the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Canada supports the creation of an open-ended working group to consider all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council, and other matters related to the Council. The working group should be given a broad enough mandate to permit all Member States to raise matters of interest to them, many of which have already been expressed in their submissions to the Secretary-General or before the Assembly.

We hope, therefore, that a resolution along these lines will be adopted by consensus.

(*spoke in French*)

I will not repeat today the elements contained in Canada's submission, except to emphasize the need to proceed carefully in this exercise. Since the end of the cold war, the Security Council has enjoyed a unity and cohesion that has not been equalled since the beginnings of our Organization, but it also faces unprecedented challenges and must take decisions of crucial importance for the future. My Government believes that our efforts must result in strengthening the cohesion and effectiveness of the Security Council. It is with this in mind that we must consider its possible expansion and the relevance of improving some of its procedures.

All institutions, whatever they may be, must adapt to change in order to maintain their legitimacy and credibility on a long-term basis. The Security Council is no exception to this rule. The increase in the number of our Organization's Member States, as well as the changes that have occurred on the international scene since the first expansion of the Security Council in 1963, are the reasons most often stated, and rightly so, to justify the need to expand the membership of the Council.

The Council must thus evolve and become more representative. In this regard, we must take into account the emergence of new key players on the world stage and their ability to contribute substantially to the maintenance of international peace and security and to the other purposes of the Organization, as well as the necessity of equitable geographic distribution. Moreover, under the present configuration of the Council many Member States, both old and new, are no longer able to sit on the Council as often as they would like.

The question of the expansion of the Council constitutes a priority for my Government. We are taking an open-minded, constructive and flexible approach to this issue, as we must all do if our work is to be successful and its results are to receive the broadest possible support of the membership as a whole.

Let us hope that our future work will have the effect of uniting us more closely in the pursuit of our common goals - that is, especially saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war and joining forces to maintain international peace and security.

Mr. BREITENSTEIN (Finland): I am addressing the General Assembly on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The Nordic Governments welcome the fact that a full-fledged debate has now been launched on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council. This question forms part - a very important and central part - of the discussion which is taking place both within and outside the United Nations about how to prepare our Organization better to meet the enormous challenges of the twenty-first century. Everyone recognizes that the reform of the composition of the Security Council and related matters are important. Thus, the process ahead requires both constructive and open-minded contributions from Member States.

The Member States have in the Charter conferred upon the Security Council the responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. They have also agreed that in carrying out its responsibilities the Council acts on behalf of the entire membership. These two basic Charter provisions are uncontested and remain fully valid today and in the future.

The maintenance of international peace and security has become an increasingly urgent and challenging task for the United Nations and its Member States. Therefore, the item now before the Assembly assumes particular importance. The questions which we have to address are the following: Is there a need for a review of the Security Council? What is the objective of such a review - that is, do we wish to discuss only an expansion of the membership of the Council only or do we seek more profound changes which touch on the role and responsibilities of the Council as well as its relationships with the other principal organs of the Organization? Finally, how do we proceed to bring about the change?

When we read the replies which Member States have submitted to the Secretary-General, it becomes clear that there is a very widespread recognition of the need for a change of the Security Council. There is therefore no need in this debate now to enter into the arguments which speak for or against reform. Suffice it to say that reform has become necessary as a result of the changes in global political and economic relations which, among other things, have resulted in a substantial increase in the membership of the Organization. This change in the global political scene and increase in the membership must also be reflected in the size and composition of the Security Council and in other related matters. Enhancing effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy should be the central considerations of any review of the Council and its composition.

Proceeding from the general agreement that change is called for, the next step is to try to define the objective of such a change. That objective is, in the view of the Nordic countries, fairly clear and obvious: to improve and strengthen the Council's capacity to discharge the functions which the Charter has entrusted to it. With the end of the cold war, the decision-making process of the Council has greatly improved. We see evidence of this in the exponential increase not only of the issues that the Council is seized of but also in the increase in the number of decisions taken by the Council.

When we review the composition of the Council, the question of expanding its membership is of major importance. Although there seem to be differing views on how the composition of the Council should be changed, a few common elements have clearly emerged.

First, the enlargement of the Council must be carried out in such a way as to allow it to discharge its responsibilities for the maintenance of international peace and security efficiently and successfully. The general view, which the Nordic countries share, is that any increase in size must take efficiency into account and must therefore be limited in scope. Wide agreement seems also to prevail that the enlargement must take into account the new political realities and that, in increasing the size of the Council, due account be taken of its members' ability and willingness to contribute politically and financially, as well as to contribute civilian and military personnel, to the implementation of the Council's decisions. This view is shared by all the Nordic countries.

Furthermore, we share the view that in the expansion account must be taken of the principle of equitable geographical representation in order to reflect adequately the membership of the United Nations itself. As can be seen from the national Nordic replies to the Secretary-General, the question of the number of permanent members whose concurring vote is needed for decisions on substantive matters is an important issue which will require careful consideration. At this stage of the discussion there is, however, no need to go further into the details concerning the specific criteria for an expansion of the Council.

While a number of Member States seem to consider that the review should concentrate on the size and composition of the Council, others are of the view that it should also encompass the question of the Council's role and responsibilities as well as its relationship to other principal organs of the Organization. The Nordic countries believe that in this situation we should all be flexible and proceed pragmatically in our future deliberations. For example, it would certainly be useful to look into the question of the transparency of the Council's proceedings. Some improvements have already emerged in this regard. On the other hand, more could be done in the interest of better involving the membership at large in the Council's work as well as the follow-up of its decisions.

Peace-keeping is a case in point. As of today, altogether, some 75 Members of the United Nations have provided personnel and logistical support for United Nations peace-keeping operations. It is only natural for those contributors that are not members of the Council to take a keen interest in collaborating with and receiving information from the Security Council on a wide range of issues related to peace-keeping. Other examples are sanctions and, of course, the financial and budgetary consequences of decisions taken by the Council. Consideration should also be given to establishing subsidiary organs of the Council in accordance with Article 29 of the Charter.

In conclusion, I should like to say a few words about the procedure. The informal consultations which have been undertaken over the past weeks will, we hope, enable the President to present a proposal that the Assembly should set up an open-ended working group to consider all aspects of the question of an increase in the membership of the Security Council and other matters related to the Council. The Nordic countries are prepared to give their full support to such a proposal and pledge their active and constructive participation in this undertaking. Furthermore, we also share the view that it is important that our work be brought to a speedy conclusion, based on the widest possible agreement among the membership. That would be a worthy contribution to the celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

Mr. RICHARDSON (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes this debate on Security Council enlargement. The statements made today and the comments submitted to the Secretary-General in response to last year's resolution of the General Assembly on this item show that there are many cross currents in this debate. We hope that the Assembly will shortly adopt by consensus a draft resolution that has already been the subject of much consultation.

The United Kingdom has set out its views on the enlargement of the Security Council in the comments we submitted to the Secretary-General and in my Secretary of State's statement in this Assembly on 28 September. We recognize that the increase in the membership of the United Nations has brought the possibility of increasing the membership of the Security Council, including its permanent membership, very much to the fore. In his statement, Mr. Hurd made it clear that, if there were to be consensus on enlargement of the Security Council, there are countries which, by virtue of their global interests and contribution to international peace and security, could in our view undertake the full range of responsibilities of a permanent member and should certainly be expected to do so.

I should like, if I may, to turn to the immediate task which lies before the open-ended working group that we hope will soon be established. It is clear to my delegation that, if it is to succeed, the group will need to continue to work in the spirit of consensus that has characterized the Assembly's action hitherto. It will also need to focus on the achievable if the length of its deliberations is not to be excessively prolonged.

From the wide spectrum of views expressed so far in the debate, the one message that comes through with clarity is that most members of this Organization now wish to see a limited enlargement of the Security Council. It seems to my delegation that the working group should focus primarily on that objective with the aim of submitting a report reflecting significant progress to the next session of the Assembly. It should be careful not to stray into tasks which fall to other bodies.

A number of delegations have commented in their statements today on the relationship between the Security Council and the General Assembly. This is of course an important question. It is a matter which is covered in depth and with great authority by the Charter itself. The President of the Security Council set out, in his statement to the Assembly on 28 October on the report of the Security Council, some of the procedural changes that the Council has recently made with the objective of increasing the transparency of its actions. That effort will need to continue, and my Government lends its full support to it. But a careful balance does need to be struck if the effectiveness of the Council is not to be adversely affected.

A fundamental point of concern for my delegation throughout the discussions in the working group and beyond will be the need to maintain the effectiveness of the Security Council at a time when it is having to respond to a massive increase in the demands put upon it. The changes which have taken place in the international situation over the past few years have for the first time enabled the Council to operate effectively as a collegiate body. As a result, the United Nations has been enabled to play the role envisaged for it on its establishment, namely as the primary means of resolving regional and other conflicts. It has assumed the position that the founding fathers intended for it at the centre of international affairs. In the debate which is just beginning - which is, as I said, one which my delegation thoroughly welcomes - we must be vigilant to safeguard the effective operation of the Council and its ability to fulfil its primary responsibility under the United Nations Charter - the maintenance of international peace and security.

The meeting rose at 6.10 p.m.